

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF BELMONT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
Monday, May 17, 2010  
6:45 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 6:48 pm by Chair Jones in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Firenze and Paolillo were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

**Executive Session**

The Board moved: To enter executive session to consider the discipline or dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0). The Board entered executive session at 6:49 PM.

*(During executive session, one substantive motion was made and passed unanimously.)*

The Board returned to open session at 7:06 PM.

**QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS**

A resident from the "Coalition for Winn Brook" asked if the Coalition could meet with the Board to discuss storm-water damage in that area. Mr. Younger replied that it will be on the June 7 agenda.

Mr. Bill Ellet, Watson Road, asked about the trash situation and why religious institutions got their trash picked up without a charge. He also asked whether the proposals for trash pick-up would impact the way business trash is dealt with. Chair Jones said that the Board has not yet discussed the trash proposals in detail and that the RFPs were for cost estimates and to see what various options would be.

**ACTION BY APPOINTMENT**

**Public Hearing – Removal of Parking Restrictions, Watson Road**

Mr. Conti explained that the Ad Hoc Parking Group is proposing to remove the 30-minute parking restriction sign on Watson Road to make it consistent with other residential areas in town – where no such restriction signs exist. As such, he said, a public hearing was scheduled to hear from neighbors and the local businesses.

Mr. David Moultrup, who sees patients on 5 Watson Road, noted that his clients are very uncomfortable parking on Watson Road due to the harassment they receive from doing so. He said it would be best to follow the recommendation and remove the sign. Ms. Freda MacDonald, also employed at 5 Watson Road, noted that the neighbors knew when they moved in that they were moving next door to a commercial property and that street parking would occur. Both Moultrup and MacDonald said that they have encouraged patients to park on Concord Ave when possible so as not to bother the neighbors.

Mr. Bill Ellet, 21 Watson Road, said that there are 14 psychotherapy offices located in 5 Watson Road, with only 3 on-site parking spaces. The offices are filled all day, causing huge parking and volume-of-traffic issues. Driveways and crosswalks are consistently blocked. In 2001, the neighborhood brought this issue to the Board and asked for help in mitigating the problem. The town, Ellet said, has had a 10-year window to do something about this situation.

Ms. Jane Winsor, 21 Watson Road, said the 30-minute restriction sign (which came out of the 2001 request to the Board) is all the neighbors have had to help control the parking and to get some relief from the volume of cars that park on Watson Road all day.

The Board discussed issues relating to this and took no action. This will be revisited at a future Board meeting.

### **Traffic Advisory Committee - Street Signs – Oliver Rd and Common St**

Mr. Clancy, Director of Community Development, appeared before the Board to discuss the street signs on Oliver Road and Common Street. The “Do Not Enter” sign on Oliver Road presently prohibits cyclists from biking there. Mr. Clancy would like to amend the sign and add “except bicycles” to the sign.

*The Board moved:* To add “except bicycles” to the sign on Oliver Road.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Clancy requested two “advanced warning signs” just before the crosswalk at the intersection of Common and Washington Street. This would alert motorists to the fact that a crosswalk is upcoming at a very busy intersection. Selectman Firenze said he is opposed to more signage in town and if we were to add this here, he said, why wouldn’t we add it to every crosswalk in town?

*The Board moved:* To add the advanced warning signs as requested.  
The motion passed (2-1).

### **National Grid, Two Petitions**

#### ***Broad Street***

Mr. Dennis Regan, a National Grid representative, appeared before the Board to discuss two petitions. The first request is to place a six-inch gas main for 116 feet on Sherman and Broad Street. Residents of Broad Street spoke from the audience and said they would like the gas main hook-up as well. Mr. Regan explained why this would be difficult. Selectman Firenze said that National Grid has a history of inappropriately dealing with street openings. Mr. Clancy said that the street openings will now be addressed by the “street opening permit coordinator.” The Board agreed that pavement restoration must be taken care of appropriately.

*The Board moved:* To approve the request for the Broad Street permit.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### ***Van Ness Road***

Mr. Regan then requested a 4-inch gas main for 70 feet at 86 Van Ness Road. Residents of Van Ness Road raised several concerns about digging up the street when there is an existing line going into the home presently. Mr. Regan said that there is no active line there now as the house got torn down and the line was shut down and capped prior to demolition. Mr. Clancy concurred with this. The residents expressed concern about huge holes left in the street and are concerned that this would happen again. Chair Jones noted that this would be illegal behavior and that National Grid would be expected to follow the law.

Chair Jones then suggested that the Van Ness neighbors meet with Mr. Regan in another room to discuss issues relating to Van Ness Road. They proceeded to do so. (See below for followup.)

### **Beech Street Backfill Discussion**

Chair Jones framed this discussion by noting that several Beech Street residents contacted the Board wondering whether basements in the area are flooding since the new backfill replacement occurred.

Mr. Clancy appeared before the Board to discuss if the Beech Street Backfill work is indeed the cause of flooded basements in and around Beech Street. Mr. Clancy reviewed data on major storms in Belmont for the past 10 years and looked to see whether properties near to where the sanitation sewer main was replaced were impacted. Did the replacement, with use of controlled density fill (flowable fill), cause the flooding? The permeability of the Beech Street backfill is not very good, Clancy said, but given that several properties in the neighborhood received flooded basements even though they were not in close proximity to the sewer repair makes it more likely that the cause of the flooding was the extreme amount of rainfall or the fact that the new sewer main no longer allows groundwater to infiltrate in and therefore relieve the surrounding area of excess groundwater.

The Board supported the conclusions of Mr. Clancy, and Mr. Clancy will follow up with the resident(s).

### **Belmont Land Trust and Woman's Club – 661 Pleasant Street**

Mr. Neil Winston (Belmont Land Trust) and Ms. Sandy Kendall (Woman's Club) appeared before the Board to support the conservation restriction request at 661 Pleasant Street, which would effectively make this property not able to be developed.

The Board signed the papers and moved to support the conservation restriction request.

*The Board moved:* To support the conservation restriction request.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **National Grid (continued)**

Mr. Regan and the Van Ness neighbors returned to the room having reached an agreement.

*The Board moved:* To approve the request for the Van Ness Road permit.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Belmont Media Center (BMC) Annual Report – Renewal 5 Yrs Contract**

Mr. Jeff Hansell, BMC Executive Director, and Mr. Myron Kassaraba, Chairman of the Board for the BMC, appeared before the Board to provide a review of the Media Center's annual report and to request renewal of the five-year contract. Mr. Kassaraba reviewed the BMC's Board of Directors, its staff, and the new studio site (which he stated was completed both on time and on budget). There is a high demand for classes and there has been overall growth in programming. The new fiber network has improved the BMC's overall quality. Verizon and Comcast fees are the main source for funding. This year, he said, the BMC will upgrade capabilities in the Selectmen's meeting room.

The Board signed a contract renewal for five years.

### **Review of Water/Sewer Rate Study and Approval of Rates**

Mr. Peter Castanino (DPW Director), consultant Chris Wilcox, and Water Division manager Mike Bishop appeared before the Board to discuss the water/sewer rate-study report and to get new rates approved. Mr. Wilcox reviewed how rates get set. Rates typically increase about 5% a year. Sewer is more expensive than water, he explained, and water has a fixed service charge, while the sewer charge increases with the size of meters used. Belmont has a uniform charge and it was suggested that it increase the block rate. Mr. Wilcox explained the fire sprinkler water pipe connection: water hooked up to pipes so water can be sent to the building in the event of a fire. Life-line rates exist,

he said, and are huge discounts to people who can't afford water. Irrigation demands are being subsidized and that should be eliminated in a new rate structure.

The proposal is for a 7-8% rate increase for FY11 (it will be 5% in the following years). This amounts to a \$22 per quarter increase for the average resident. Large users will see the biggest increase of \$115 per quarter, or 19%. (This relates to big homes, with big lawns, and only impacts 1% of people in Belmont.) Non-residential users will see a 10% increase.

Selectman Firenze asked: what accounts for the first-year spike? Mr. Wilcox said that water consumption dropped last summer and has been dropping consistently due to the weather, low-flow plumbing, and the economy. If people use less water, he said, the water rate goes up.

Mr. Castanino said that Belmont is changing the way it fundamentally charges for water as low-use users currently subsidize the high-use users. The goal is to restructure the rates and have a fair rate structure that meets our needs and takes capital maintenance into account.

The Board approved the recommendations, but expressed concern over the first-year spike.

*The Board moved:* To accept the rates as recommended.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Younger said he will schedule a special meeting for next year's rate-setting discussion.

### **Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

- He thanked Mr. Castanino for a terrific "DPW Day".
- Beech Street center trash – The Town's contract with Springwell says Belmont is responsible for the trash from Springwell's activities at the Center..
- June 7th meeting – the Board will meet with the Board of Assessors regarding the vacant position.
  - The "Goals and Objectives" chart for the Board is being updated.
- The ice rink made an \$8,700 net profit because there were no major maintenance issues. However, there remains serious potential for a catastrophic failure. The Board discussed ways to increase the revenue and whether privatizing the rink would be a good option.
  - The "Public Trash Receptacles" report is complete – DPW may make changes and remove underutilized receptacles.

- MBTA – met with transportation on the tunnel issue and the joint use of poles – Mr. Younger is following up with Light Dept. Manager Tim Richardson. Chair Jones said he would like to meet with the Light Board soon.
- Summer hours at Town Hall and Homer Building – Mr. Younger proposed to repeat last year’s implementation of summer hours for the Town Hall and Homer Building, closing at 1:00 pm on Fridays while shortening lunch hours to ensure the same number of hours worked. Last summer the town saved \$3,000 on cooling and energy following this approach. Mr. Younger said he would like to begin the new schedule starting on June 15 through Labor Day, which would also mean that the Homer Gallery is not open on Friday evenings. Selectman Firenze said he does not support this as he believes employees are not really taking shorter lunch breaks, and in reality, working fewer hours overall. Mr. Younger said there was no abuse of lunch breaks last summer.

*The Board moved:* To approve the reduced summer hours.  
The motion passed (2-1).

## **ACTION BY CONSENT**

### **Clear Water Action**

Chair Jones stated that he is not familiar with this. The Board decided to deal with this issue at a later date.

### **Vote on Warrant Articles**

*The Board moved:* Torecommend favorable action on Articles 3-10 and 12.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Approval of BOS Minutes 2/23/2010**

*The Board moved:* To approve the minutes of 2/23/2010.  
The motion passed, with one abstention.

## **ACTION BY WRITING**

### **Renewal License**

*The Board moved:* To approve the license renewal requests of Sacca Junk, Waverley Collectibles, and Jewelry by GVS.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Agreement for Services – Police Dept. and Cook & Company**

Mr. Younger is getting additional information on this.

## **Approval Election – June 14 Warrants**

*The Board moved:* To sign the Warrant for the June 14 town election.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board signed the Warrant.

## **DPW – Sand, Gravel & Loam Bid Contracts**

*The Board moved:* To accept the recommendation of Mr. Castanino for the Loam Bid DPW contracts.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

## **OTHER**

- Block party form issue – A resident refused to sign the “waiver of liability” form. Selectman Firenze asked that the Board review the form. The Board discussed.
- Overlay accounts – Mr. Younger will check on their status.
- Town Counsel reappointment – The Board discussed whether and when it should go out for bid for Town Counsel services.
- The Recreation Department appointment letter needs a response.
- The Incinerator Site letter needs a response.

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 pm.